

Washington, DC – Today it was announced that members of the Oregon National Guard who were exposed to hexavalent chromium while serving in Iraq will be assisted through the new Qarmat Ali Medical Surveillance Program. This program will be a subset of the existing Gulf War Registry for injured veterans, which began following the first Gulf War.



Congressman Blumenauer in a July 17th meeting with members of the Oregon National Guard

The announcement comes on the heels of a [letter Congressman Blumenauer sent to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates](#), requesting the classified terms of KBR's contract with the Army that may have transferred KBR liability to the federal government and taxpayers.

"It is critical that we care for every veteran wounded in Iraq, and I am glad the VA is taking

action to monitor, test, and treat the members of the Oregon National Guard who suffered chemical exposure,” **said Blumenauer**. “We must also address the bigger issue of preventing this sort of catastrophe from ever happening again. Negligently exposing people to toxic chemicals will not be tolerated, and whoever is responsible must be held fully accountable.”

“Last year, I introduced a bill to ensure military personnel are informed if they have been subjected to potentially harmful materials or contaminants,” **said Schrader**. “I am pleased to hear that the Veterans Administration is establishing a program for soldiers who may have experienced the harmful effects of materials such as Hexavalent Chromium so that they are able to receive necessary testing. We have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of our brave men and women overseas and here at home. That responsibility does not end when they leave the combat zone – our responsibility is a lifelong commitment.”

The VA will be contacting the veterans by letter and phone call to enroll those exposed into the program. They will provide the following services:

- Provide ear, nose, throat exam
- Provide lung exam
- Take chest x-ray (which they will continue to do every 5 years)
- Skin exam